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Redevelopment Board Minutes 05/16/2011

Minutes of Monday, May 16, 2011
Arlington Redevelopment Board
2nd Floor Conference Room, Town Hall Annex
Approved : 6-6-11

Members Present:
Michael Cayer
Ted Fields
Bruce Fitzsimmons
Christine Scypinski
Andrew West

Also present were members of the public.

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Fitzsimmons at 7:00pm.

Mr. Fitzsimmons opened the special permit hearing for 30-50 Mill Street for signage and lighting. Adelaide Grady of Wood Partners distributed to the Board cut sheets for the intended bollard light, which have a bronze finish and a warm LED fixture. The parking lot lights would be on 12' poles. She added that additional lights would be in the courtyard/barbecue area. She presented colors for the ground-faced limestone-type finish. A sample board of two color schemes would be presented on site at a later date for Board for approval. Tim Williams from Allen & Major presented the bench designs. Mr. West observed that the plan sheet did not show the agreed-upon change to the stair landing at the bend in the ramp. Mr. Williams said it would be addressed. Kevin Burke from Burke Plus Design presented the signage plan. The signs would be externally illuminated, from ground-mounted fixtures. The signs were fabricated aluminum with a detailed cornice at the top edge. On a question from Mr. Fields regarding the increase in size of the 22 Mill Street sign, Ms. Winstanley O'Connor advised that approval would need to be sought and received from 22 Mill Street for that sign, which is on the property of 22 Mill Street, not 30-50 Mill. Ms. Kowalski asked that lighting details be provided before approval is sought, since illumination details were not submitted. Mr. Fitzsimmons questioned whether all three signs for the parking area near 22 Mill Street were necessary. Ms. Grady agreed, and eliminated one such sign.

Chris Loreti, 56 Adams Street questioned whether the old Brigham's sign at Mill Street and Mill Brook Lane would be removed. Ms. Winstanley O'Connor replied that it would be removed. She also clarified that the applicants were requesting approval for all proposed signs except that on 22 Mill Street property, and except for lighting, and for colors, which would be subject to later approval pending view of the mock-up of materials on site. Mr. Cayer moved to approve the proposal with the exception of the 22 Mill sign, sign lighting, and colors. Mr. Fields seconded and all voted in favor.

The Board then turned to Symmes business, and heard Rick Bendetson of Diversified Funding Incorporated describe his business and his plans for the Symmes development. Mr. Bendetson explained that he was one of the original finalists to develop the project, and that he had been interested since 2003. He cited his involvement in past Arlington developments including the Cutter School, Arlington 5 Cents Savings Bank, and as principal partner in the Legacy. He spent twelve years with Alan McClennen and Ed Tsoi on that project, he said, and had personally built over 7,000 residential units and successfully completed each development. He proposed to build 158 units at Symmes, starting with the Town Houses. He said he proposed to build the project all at once. Mr. Bendetson had a letter of commitment from Citizen's Bank, and he said he would sign a personal guarantee. He said he believed he had more experience developing in the region, a better design, and the necessary financial strength to accomplish the best project for Arlington. He said the project would start with rental and homeownership units, but would all be ownership in the end. Mr. Cayer asked if it was necessary to have town houses on the medical office building site to make the project work financially. Mr. Bendetson replied that it was necessary, in order to keep the affordable housing and open space required. If the Town were to give the MOB site to the developer it would help make the project work. Mr. Bendetson also commented that the different types of units proposed was best for Arlington's market, as buyers have different needs. The marketing is limited if the units are all the same, it would compete with itself, he concluded. He stated that The Architectural Team (TAT) would present a plan. The Board had concerns about the viability of the public open spaces. He said that he was willing to work with the Board within limitations.

The Board then heard from Upton Partners. Budge and Jake Upton discussed with the Board the intended process for outside expert review of developers' pro formas. They explained that some of their information would be submitted in confidence to protect their competitive position.

Mr. Fields then moved to adjourn, Mr. Cayer seconded and all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kowalski
Secretary ex Officio